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Address

of the Duke of Loubat

Honorary President

OF THE

Thirteenth International Congress  
of Americanists

HELD AT THE

American Museum of Natural History  
in the City of New York

October 20-25, 1902

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ADDRESS OF THE DUKE OF LOUBAT ON OPENING OF THE AFTER-  
NOON SESSION, OCTOBER 20, 1902.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.—When these International Congresses were organized, in 1875, it was understood that they were to be held only in Europe. At Stockholm, in 1894, however, a special session was granted to Mexico for 1895, although at the same time the Netherlands were chosen as the place of meeting for the regular Congress of 1896. As this last Congress was never convened, the Société des Américanistes of Paris took the matter up, and a regular one was held in Paris in 1900, at which some new regulations were adopted. One of the two most important of these was that thereafter the Congresses should be held alternately in America and in Europe, but could not be held twice consecutively in the same country. Thus the next Congress, two years hence, will be held in Europe; and the following, four years hence, in either North or South America, but not in the United States. The other important regulation was that six vice-presidents, and no more, should be elected for each Congress; namely, two from the country where the Congress was being held, and four from among the official foreign delegates. Accordingly you have elected as vice-presidents gentlemen representing France, Germany, Mexico, and Sweden, as Congresses have already assembled in Paris, Berlin, Mexico, and Stockholm; the two remaining ones you have divided between the United States and the Argentine Republic.

It is customary, at the opening of each Session, for the Presiding Officer to pronounce a eulogy on the distinguished Americanists who have departed this life since the last meeting took place, and also to give a summary of what has been done in our science since the last Congress was held. This will be done by the gentlemen who will in turn occupy the chair.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, as I have had so many Mexican Codices reproduced, I have been asked to say a few words concerning them. I expected to do this on Saturday next, so I am not ready, and must crave your indulgence if I only give you a few notes that I have hastily written out.

As you all know, there are several kinds of Mexican Codices: namely,—

RELIGIOUS CODICES: The Vaticanus No. 3773, which has been in the Vatican Library for over three hundred and fifty years; the Borgia,

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of the Propaganda Fide; the Borbonicus, of the Chamber of Deputies at Paris, which formerly belonged to the Escorial in Spain, etc.

HISTORICAL CODICES: The annals of Chimalpahin.

TRIBUTARY CODICES (TAX-ROLLS): The Humboldt Codices of the Royal Library of Berlin.

PEREGRINATION CODICES: The Porfirio Diaz of the Museo Nacional of the City of Mexico.

TITLE DEEDS, which are numerous, etc.

As you all remember, Itzcohuatl, the fourth king of Mexico (1427-40), wishing to annihilate everything relating to the histories of the ancient nations which had inhabited the Valley of Mexico previous to the arrival of the Aztecs, ordered their annals to be burned; and thus were destroyed, among others, those of the Acolhuas and of the Tepacanacas.

You all know that on the thirty-first day of December, 1520, the Tlaxcallan allies of Cortes set fire to several palaces of Tetzco, and among others to the superb one built by Necahuilpilli, the fifth king of Tetzco, who died four years before the arrival of the Spaniards, and that in this palace were the archives of the kingdom, and many other important documents, which were thus destroyed.

You also remember that the Codices were intrusted to the care of the priesthood, and were kept by them in the temples, and that when the Indians took a city in time of war, they immediately burned the temples and the many archives contained therein.

At the inauguration of the Great Temple of the City of Mexico in 1487, under Ahuizotl, the eighth king of Mexico, 80,400 prisoners of war were sacrificed, according to Brasseur de Bourbourg, although the Codex Telleriano-Remensis states the number to have been only 20,000.

You will now understand, ladies and gentlemen, that civilization demanded the abolition of these human sacrifices. This was the reason why the friars destroyed all the idols and all the religious codices they could lay their hands on; but you must also remember that they very carefully collected everything relating to the history, the customs, the religions, etc., of the ancient inhabitants of that part of America, and that all that we know about these people is due to the writings of these very monks, and especially to Father Sahagun, the learned Franciscan, whose *General History of New Spain* ought to be translated into English.

I now call to the chair Professor F. W. Putnam, the vice-president for the United States.







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